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## **Face-to-face get-together**

As has become tradition across the country over the past three decades during the first Tuesday in August, police departments in Kokomo and Miami County were just a few of the localities nationwide that took part in National Night Out.

“The introduction of National Night Out, ‘America’s Night Out Against Crime,’ in 1984 began an effort to promote involvement in crime prevention activities, police-community partnerships, neighborhood camaraderie and send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back,” according to the organization’s website.

In practice, though, the event is an occasion for residents and police officers to “come together, greet their neighbors and have fun,” Tribune reporter Mike Fletcher wrote in his story on the Kokomo activities, which we published Wednesday.

If hot dogs, games and frivolity sounds trivial, it’s not. A quote from Capt. Brian Thompson of the Kokomo Police Department in Fletcher’s story perfectly illustrates the importance of the annual event.

“They [residents] get to see us in a different atmosphere, and we see them in different atmosphere,” Thompson said.

You see, if law enforcement only encounters the public when ugliness occurs, it doesn’t give an accurate picture any more than citizens only seeing police when the chips are down. Neither limited perspective is a complete depiction of either. The community and keepers of the peace can only mutually benefit from meeting on even, lighthearted ground.

Kudos to Target, Kokomo Housing Authority, City of Kokomo, Carver Center and Sam’s Club, who co-sponsored the local effort; they are supporting a worthy cause.

If anything, everyone would benefit from more events like National Night Out.